

NEVADA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Minutes of Meeting

May 18, 2005

A meeting of the Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC) was held on Wednesday, May 18, 2005, in the Town of Truckee Council Chambers, 10183 Truckee Airport Road, Truckee, California. The meeting was scheduled for 9:30 a.m.

Members Present: Nate Beason, Tim Brady, Patti Ingram, Russ Steele, Josh Susman, *Conley Weaver

Members Absent: Robin Sutherland

Staff Present: Dan Landon, Executive Director; Nancy Holman, Administrative Services Officer; Michael Woodman, Transportation Planner; Toni Perry, Administrative Assistant

Standing Orders: Chairman Ingram convened the Nevada County Transportation Commission meeting at 9:31 a.m.

Pledge of Allegiance:

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

1. Financial Reports:

A. March and April 2005

There were no comments.

2. Correspondence:

B. "Post Office Poses Traffic Challenges", by Gerard Tassone, in The Union, 3/12/05.

Commissioner Brady mentioned that a request was made at a recent Grass Valley Street System Master Plan meeting to have a regularly scheduled article written in The Union reporting on traffic issues in Nevada County. He added the citizens appear to be uninformed or misinformed about the progress of projects and the planning taking place to resolve transportation problems. Commissioner Brady stated the Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC) newsletter is not as widely read as the local newspaper. He requested this idea be brought up for further discussion at the July NCTC meeting and to set forth a plan as to how NCTC will get news out to the public regarding progress on transportation projects and also decide who will author the reports.

L. Sierra Sun newspaper article - "Road Work Ahead", by David Bunker and Jamie Bate, regarding construction beginning on Truckee's dual roundabouts. 4/27/05, File 1200.9.

Commissioner Susman commented that construction has begun on the Truckee dual roundabouts located at the I-80/SR 89 intersections.

*Commissioner Weaver arrived at 9:40 a.m.

3. NCTC Appendix B of the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual.

As stated in the agenda, the Appendix B included in May's agenda packet replaces the one included in the March 16, 2005 NCTC agenda packet that had typographical errors under Step 4 of the Transportation Planner's salary range.

4. A Solution for Local Transportation Projects: Presentation by Josh Susman, Council Member, Town of Truckee, and NCTC Commissioner.

Commissioner Susman introduced Truckee's Community Development Director, Tony Lashbrook. Mr. Lashbrook is the top candidate for the position of Town Manager.

Commissioner Susman referred to a document prepared by the Town's Public Works Engineer, Dan Wilkins, which gave an overview of Truckee's development of a sales tax measure as a revenue source. He reported when the Town incorporated in 1993, it was estimated that \$28 million was needed to put the major roads into good condition. He stated that due to the 1/2-cent sales tax measure that passed in 1998, all of the main roads have been repaired within a six-year period. Commissioner Susman stated the sales tax was set for a twelve-year funding period, so the Town is now holding public workshops to decide how to spend the money for the next six years. He commented that with the tourist-based economy in Truckee, the sales tax measure allows both locals and visitors to contribute to the upkeep of the road system. Commissioner Susman offered to provide copies to the Commissioners of the staff reports generated when the Town's sales tax initiative was developed.

Commissioner Brady asked if there was a possibility of extending the twelve-year "sunset" clause for the sales tax initiative. Commissioner Susman replied that will be part of the community discussion to determine if they will expense or bank some of the money as a reserve. He also shared the idea of a countywide tax measure to finance transportation projects that would replace Truckee's initiative.

5. Executive Director's Report

5.1 Local Funding Options for Regional Transportation

Executive Director Landon referred to a report included with the agenda packet that was prepared by Arthur Bauer and Associates in December 2002, which reviewed the transportation funding levels within Nevada County and the commitment of those funds towards transportation problems. He stated, further, that the report identified the funding gap between available revenue and the cost of several major capital projects, explored new revenue sources, and provided strategic funding options and recommendations. Mr. Landon explained he updated the tables in the report, however the conclusions of the report were still valid. He pointed out that since the report was written, the estimated projects costs have increased from \$20 million to \$40 million. The funding gap has widened from \$10 million to just over \$20 million.

Executive Director Landon also reviewed a scenario utilizing the revenue from a 1/4-cent sales tax, with 50% of the funds going toward maintenance, and 50% to capital improvements. He suggested forming a committee made up of individuals from private and public sectors to discuss the pros and cons of a sales tax measure, identify improvements the community would support, and develop a plan of how to proceed. Mr. Landon stated he thought an excellent way to begin the dialogue would be to put transportation-related articles in the newspaper. He noted various counties where sales tax

measures have already passed and mentioned that KNCO radio recently conducted a survey to gauge support for such a measure in Nevada County.

Commissioner Brady noted that a consultant who specializes in passing tax measures indicated it took about one year to prepare for such action and the cost was about \$100,000 to run the program. Executive Director Landon responded that in rural California counties, the initial polling to determine the likelihood of passing a sales tax measure costs about \$30,000 to 40,000, and the cost to run a successful campaign runs \$3 to \$4 per voter. Commissioner Brady questioned if this is the appropriate time to start this type of action. He noted that there are several issues that need to be considered before approaching a measure. Commissioner Brady questioned the basis for recommending a 1/4-cent sales tax measure in the report.

Executive Director Landon responded that Arthur Bauer did some community outreach when he prepared the report and that a 1/4-cent sales tax would retire the funding gap we currently have. He also stated that as a public agency, NCTC can provide information to the community but cannot campaign for a ballot item. Commissioner Steele remarked that a citizen's advisory committee would need to serve as advocates.

Jerry Mehren, a member of the public, shared information he heard about State Senator Joe Dunn speaking on the State's ability to fund transportation improvements.

Commissioner Susman made a motion to have Executive Director Landon bring back an Action Item to the Commission suggesting the next steps toward a solution to fund the transportation shortfall in Nevada County. Commissioner Brady seconded the motion. Commissioner Weaver commented that last year the voters in Nevada City opposed a sales tax increase so the Nevada City Council is currently looking for ways to meet their basic necessity overall fiscal problems. Chairman Ingram commented that educating the public is critical. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Beason asked if the pending Federal Highway bill would give any relief on funding SR 49. Executive Director Landon responded that potentially it would, but the Senate passed the bill at a greater amount than the House, and the President has threatened to veto the bill. Mr. Landon stated that the transportation community is hoping for a compromise before the May 31st deadline, and an increase in the share returned to California.

5.2 Grass Valley Corridor Improvement Project (GVCIP)

Executive Director Landon reported that Caltrans District 3 has indicated they may fund a 50-75% portion of this project through the 2006 State Highway Operations and Protection Program (SHOPP). He stated that by August 2005 we plan to have the reports ready so Caltrans can include the project in the 2006 SHOPP. Commissioner Brady asked if the negotiations for these funds would cause a delay to the overall project. Executive Director Landon replied that the SHOPP funding negotiations and project development work are being done in parallel. Mr. Landon stated further that Bickett Engineering, Inc. (BEI) has retained an environmental firm so that preliminary environmental documents will be completed in August and will be included in the Project Study Report. He mentioned that the Project Team is working carefully to be sure that the final project design will meet all the goals and expectations of the general public, the City of Grass Valley, and the Commission.

Executive Director Landon introduced Greg Bickett, of BEI, who gave a brief presentation on the proposed improvements at the Idaho-Maryland/East Main Street intersection and the onramp at SR 49, the Bennett Street offramp, and the weave along the Golden Center Freeway between these two

ramps. Mr. Bickett explained the process of combining the East Main Street offramp of SR 49 with the Bennett Street offramp, creating a two-lane collector/distributor road. He stated the improvements include an extended weave area, bridge widening on the Bennett Street overcrossing, retaining walls on the Bennett Street offramp, and an extended onramp to SR 49.

Commissioner Steele asked if Caltrans is considering increasing their share of funding for this project. Executive Director Landon responded Caltrans is looking at bringing this project into the SHOPP (State Highway Operations and Protection Program) and thereby funding 50-75% of the project costs.

Commissioner Steele questioned if Caltrans had seen the design for the collector/distributor road. Greg Bickett replied that Caltrans has informally reviewed the design and the next step is for BEI to submit the Project Study Report (PSR) for their formal approval. Mr. Bickett further explained that the next step in completing the PSR is to determine the best improvement for the Idaho-Maryland/East Main Street intersection. Doug Hobbs, of BEI, reported that he is working with Caltrans to verify the accident statistics in the weave area to determine if safety funds can be used for project construction. In response to a question from the audience, Mr. Bickett indicated the Bennett Street offramp could be closed for approximately one year during construction. Mr. Bickett responded to several questions from the audience regarding the retaining wall structures for the project.

Commissioner Beason asked for confirmation that adding the additional lane will solve the existing weave problem and questioned if the next challenge is to identify the best way to manage queuing at the Idaho-Maryland/East Main Street intersection. Mr. Bickett confirmed Commissioner Beason was correct on both points.

There was further discussion as to whether a traffic signal or a roundabout should be installed at the Idaho-Maryland/East Main Street intersection to help the flow of traffic at the weave on SR 49. Mr. Bickett said the queuing of traffic exiting the freeway and potentially backing up onto the freeway is an important design consideration. He said the additional information would be ready in approximately two weeks. Commissioner Brady asked if the extended weave has a long life cycle for improving traffic flow, and if the success of its operation is dependent on the Dorsey Drive Interchange being built. Greg Bickett responded that the collector/distributor road alternative and extended weave area will operate well for a very long time, and that operation of the collector/distributor alternative is independent of construction of the Dorsey Drive interchange.

Executive Director Landon stated he would provide Commissioners with the right-of-way needs, LOS operation, and construction costs for both the roundabout and traffic signal alternatives, so that an informed decision can be made. Chairman Ingram mentioned that the City of Grass Valley would have the extended left-turn pocket completed at the Richardson Street/Bennett Street/East Main Street intersection before the other construction project would start, in order to support the additional traffic that will be diverted through downtown and the frontage road system.

5.3 Crestview Intersection/Interchange Project Report

Executive Director Landon reported that Caltrans has given approval of the interchange location so that analysis of the proposed at-grade intersection associated with the South Hills Village development can proceed. Mr. Landon stated there would be a community workshop held on July 11 [since changed to July 21st] in the LOVE Building to show the public the proposed interchange improvements and to provide additional information on the intersection.

6B. Caltrans District 3 - Public Outreach: Widening of SR 49/La Barr Meadows Road: Ann Marie Robinson, Caltrans Planner and Liaison for Nevada County.

Ann Marie Robinson reported on the two workshops held April 19th and 26th for the La Barr Meadows Road area improvements on SR 49. She indicated that a third workshop was held at Ponderosa Pines Mobile Home Park. Ms. Robinson stated that all three workshops were successful.

Tom Brannon, Caltrans Project Manager for Nevada County, was not in attendance at this meeting so a project report was not given. Commissioner Susman asked Ann Marie Robinson if it would be possible to have Caltrans give a presentation to the Truckee Town Council regarding the mitigation planting project. She responded that would be possible.

Executive Director Landon reported that Tom Brannon has received a promotion and will be the supervising engineer over project managers for special funded projects. He stated that, due to Mr. Brannon's promotion, Nevada County will have a new Project Manager.

Executive Director Landon asked the Town of Truckee Director of Public Works and Engineering, Dan Wilkins, to give an update on the I-80/SR 89 Dual Roundabouts project. Mr. Wilkins reported the goal for project completion is October 2005, and the total project cost for design, environmental, engineering, construction, and mitigation is currently estimated at \$4.5 million. He stated that \$400,000 worth of work was completed in the first two weeks of construction. Mr. Wilkins stated this interchange has the highest volume of traffic in the Town, and that Truckee is the lead agency on the project.

CONSENT ITEMS:

7. NCTC Minutes: March 18, 2005. *Approved.*
8. Revised Findings of Apportionments for FY 2005/06: *Approved Resolution 05-16 adopting the Revised Findings of Apportionments for FY 2005/06.*
9. Allocation Request from Nevada County: *Approved Resolution 05-17 to allocate \$40,798.00 from Community Transit Services Funds to Nevada County for transit/paratransit operations in FY 2004/05.*
10. Allocation Request from the City of Grass Valley: *Approved Resolution 05-18 to allocate \$25,050 of Local Transportation Funds to the City of Grass Valley for pedestrian/bicycle/sidewalk safety improvements.*
11. The Town of Truckee's Request for NCTC's Approval of Certifications and Assurances of their 2003/04 FY FTA 5311 Grant Application Package in the Amount of \$24,645. *Approved Resolution 05-19 attesting that NCTC certifies and assures that the Town of Truckee's Transit Division has met the requirements for applying for FTA 5311 grant funds.*
12. Allocation Request from Nevada County: *Approved Resolution 05-20 to allocate \$305,000 of Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) funds to Nevada County for their 2005 Overlay Project.*
13. NCTC Lease Agreement with Ridgewood Associates: *Adopted Resolution 05-21 approving the lease agreement with Ridgewood Associates for NCTC office space.*

Commissioner Beason made a motion to approve the consent items. Commissioner Steele seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS:

14. Nevada County Capital Improvement Program (CIP): This document presents information on County road system projects for a five-year period.

John Rumsey, Senior Civil Engineer in the Department of Transportation and Sanitation (DOTS), reported a key emphasis is on Brunswick Corridor projects. Mr. Rumsey said DOTS would be coordinating a project with the City of Grass Valley to put in a left-turn pocket at Town Talk Road. He also reported work will begin in June at the Idaho-Maryland Road/Brunswick Road intersection to force a right turn onto Brunswick, temporary islands will be installed to change traffic flow, and radar feedback signs will be used for traffic calming.

Commissioner Susman mentioned it would be appropriate to have included the Nevada County Planning Commission's comments and also to have more definitive criteria for projects, other than they are safety projects, and that various roads are being widened for undesignated amounts with a total project expense of \$250,000. John Rumsey responded that accident rates are a determining factor in deciding which projects to include and the project limits could be over a widespread area, so it is difficult to identify a specific location. Mr. Rumsey stated they must get design and construction approval from the Board of Supervisors before anything is built. He stated there would be a public hearing on the CIP after staff meets with each supervisor on projects in their district.

Commissioner Brady asked how the County interacts with the cities when the road they are improving leaves their jurisdiction. John Rumsey responded they seek to coordinate efforts with the other jurisdiction to join them on a project, depending on their funding ability to construct their portion of the roadway. Commissioner Steele asked for a definition of an "unimproved path" and questioned why it would cost \$35,000. John Rumsey defined it as a "decomposed granite-type" non-asphalt surface and referred to such a project to be constructed along the Combie corridor. He stated that there are not sufficient funds to build an asphalt path at this time but, as funds become available, asphalt will be installed.

Mr. Rumsey stated the CIP is on the Nevada County website and comments could be directed to Sue Zajac or himself at the Nevada County DOTS.

15. Employee Health Benefit Compensation

Executive Director Landon explained that staff was faced with a cost increase for health insurance benefits and that the new high deductible health plan provides a high quality benefit, without an increase to the NCTC budget. Commissioner Steele questioned why a local bank was not approached to set up this new health benefit account. Mr. Landon responded that the local banks do not handle this type of service and that Wells Fargo Bank has a program in place that is compliant with the Internal Revenue Service requirements.

Commissioner Susman made a motion to adopt Resolution 05-22, which authorizes NCTC to provide a health savings account for NCTC staff, and to adopt Resolution 05-23 designating Wells Fargo Bank as the health savings account provider for NCTC. Commissioner Weaver seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Susman introduced the Town of Truckee's Vice-Mayor Beth Ingalls who was in the audience.

16. 2005/06 Overall Work Program

Executive Director Landon explained that the NCTC 2005/06 Overall Work Program (OWP) was circulated to member agencies and he discussed comments that were received. Mr. Landon shared that Commissioner Steele had asked him to add an "Administrative Fee Schedule" to charge for NCTC staff time when preparing for private sector developments. Mr. Landon stated he felt the schedule should be included in the NCTC Policies and Procedures Manual rather than in the annual budget. He stated that he had developed a draft proposal, which establishes a 5% administrative fee for working on a private sector project and he will bring the proposal to NCTC as an amendment to the Policies and Procedures Manual. Commissioner Brady agreed on the importance of reimbursing NCTC for their activities, such as with the Crestview project. He stressed his concern that NCTC not look as though they are the proponent for Crestview, or other development projects, but merely the facilitator of the traffic studies.

In relation to comments on the OWP by Nevada City, Executive Director Landon noted the City's concern over the deteriorated condition of Red Dog Road and he reiterated that NCTC has no jurisdiction over that facility, therefore Nevada City and Nevada County would have to negotiate final resolution of the issue.

Commissioner Steele made a motion to adopt Resolution 05-24 approving the NCTC 2005/06 OWP. Commissioner Brady seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

17. Regional Transportation Mitigation Fee (RTMF) Update

Executive Director Landon stated that he and Chairman Ingram had contacted Barbara Bashall, Executive Director of the Nevada County Contractors' Association (NCCA), to get a sense of the NCCA's position on this RTMF update. Ms. Bashall informed them that she would be unable to attend the May 18th NCTC meeting and requested additional time to review the update before action is taken. Therefore, Mr. Landon requested that NCTC defer action on the RTMF until the July 20th NCTC meeting.

Commissioner Brady agreed with the need to allow additional time to review the proposed update. Commissioner Steele asked to have an audit process put into place to insure that the developer fee collected by the City of Grass Valley equals what is transferred to NCTC. He would like to communicate to the public what NCTC does and how the actions it implements will improve traffic in the future. Chairman Ingram stated she understood that GASB 34 requires itemization of funding so the public can see where funds are being spent. Mr. Landon stated he would review the format of the NCTC RTMF reports to insure that the public can easily understand them.

Commissioner Weaver made a motion to defer discussion and approval of the RTMF update. Commissioner Beason seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

18. Federal Funding For Intercity Rail

Executive Director Landon referred to the article in the recent NCTC newsletter about the Reno Rail Extension Study, and the proposed letters to be sent by NCTC supporting a federal/state partnership to fund intercity rail along the I-80 corridor.

Commissioner Steele made a motion to direct the NCTC Chairman to sign the letters. Commissioner Susman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

19. NCTC's Opposition to Suspension of Proposition 42 Funding

Executive Director Landon reported Governor Schwarzenegger had recently proposed to adjust the State Budget and return Proposition 42 funds to the counties for transportation funding, however the Governor has indicated it would be prudent to continue pressure on the legislature to approve the budget change. Commissioner Susman mentioned he attended a meeting last week in Sacramento where support was indicated to not only reinstate Proposition 42 funding, but to reword the proposition so the funds cannot be diverted in the future. Commissioner Beason stated the Nevada County Board of Supervisors sent a similar letter six weeks ago and he encouraged the additional support.

Commissioner Susman made a motion to adopt Resolution 05-26 directing the NCTC Chairman to sign letters to our legislators opposing the suspension of Proposition 42 funding. Commissioner Beason seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

20. Bike Commute Week

Executive Director Landon reported the Bicyclists of Nevada County and the Sierra Express Bicycle Club contacted NCTC staff requesting support for Bike Commute Week May 16-22. Commissioner Beason commented he would like the NCTC to support any type of alternative transportation. Commissioner Weaver commented the Nevada City Council passed a similar resolution and Chairman Ingram mentioned the City of Grass Valley also passed a resolution in support.

Commissioner Beason made a motion to adopt Resolution 05-27 approving support of Bike Commute Week. Commissioner Brady seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

21. Nevada County Transit Services Division Request for NCTC's Approval of Certifications and Assurances for their FTA 5311(f) Grant Application Package in the Amount of \$415,000.

Executive Director Landon stated that Nevada County Transit Services Division is requesting federal grant funding for new vehicles to accomplish their proposed service agreement with the Capital Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA) and Amtrak to provide transportation to and from the Auburn train station. Bill Derrick, Transit Services Manager, explained that the Transit Services Division would like to acquire buses that are better suited for this type of express service.

Commissioner Beason made a motion to adopt Resolution 05-28 that approves the programming of FTA Section 5311(f) grant funds for the purchase of two thirty-foot clean diesel buses to be used in the Capital Corridor bus feeder service between Grass Valley and Auburn. Commissioner Brady seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

George Robertson, a citizen of Truckee who lives near the SR 89 Mousehole, stated his concerns over the lack of action to alleviate pedestrian dangers through the Mousehole. Mr. Robertson referred to the study, prepared in 1997 by Nolte and Associates, to evaluate the feasibility of widening the Mousehole. He questioned if it would be possible to update the construction cost

estimates, since the report was completed about eight years ago. He said this would allow the Town of Truckee to make plans based on up-to-date cost estimates.

NONAGENDIZED QUESTIONS AND RESPONSE:

Commissioner Beason directed a question to Telecare regarding a comment made to him that Telecare's vouchers have exceeded the funding available. Susan Healy-Harman, Director of Gold Country Telecare, responded that Telecare gets an allocated amount of \$13,500 for vouchers each fiscal year and they have exceeded that amount. She explained they usually run out of money each year around April, so they are presently redeeming vouchers that have already been issued but they have no funds to issue new ones. Commissioner Beason stated he attended a meeting of the Area 4 Agency on Aging and Pat McVicker stated Telecare should contact them and they may be able to reallocate some funds for more vouchers.

Commissioner Weaver stated the NCTC May meeting packet was quite large and was not received until the last week before the meeting. He questioned if Commissioners could receive the meeting packet with more of a lead-time than one week before the meeting. Commissioner Brady agreed he would like at least one week to review materials before the meeting. Executive Director Landon stated that staff would do their best to comply with this request in the future.

COMMISSION ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Chairman Susman mentioned he had stopped in at Senator Boxer's office in Sacramento and spoke with her staff in regards to making sure the \$3 million that has been included in the House version of the reauthorization of the Federal Transportation Act for the SR 89 Mousehole actually gets funded. He stated Congressman Doolittle made provisions to have the project listed for funding, and that this project is a continuing priority for the Town of Truckee. Commissioner Susman asked Executive Director Landon to work with Dan Wilkins to create a presentation for the Truckee Town Council outlining the steps needed to go forward with the Mousehole project.

SCHEDULE FOR NEXT MEETING:

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 20, 2005 at 8:30 a.m., at the Nevada County Board of Supervisors Chambers, 950 Maidu Avenue, first floor, Nevada City.

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

Commissioner Weaver moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Beason seconded the motion. Chairman Ingram adjourned the meeting at 11:23 a.m.

Respectfully submitted: _____
Antoinette Perry, Administrative Assistant

Approved on: _____

By: _____
Patti Ingram, Chairman
Nevada County Transportation Commission